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What would Ozzy Osbourne's amazing solo career be without the many guitar heroes who have stood beside him for the past 30-plus years? Not much, unless he had his sights on playing music other than hard rock and metal, which is why we decided to pay some respect to the 10 six-string gods who exerted the greatest impact on Ozzy's career.

10

Steve Vai

Though his superlative guitar skills never actually made it onto an Osbourne album, at one point, Steve Vai was virtually confirmed to succeed Zakk Wylde for 1995's 'Ozzmosis,' LP. So while none of this came to pass and Vai's involvement became limited to co-writing one song, 'My Little Man,' we are talking about Steve friggin' Vai here!

9

Alex Skolnick

Another fleet-fingered guitar hero who almost landed the coveted Ozzy Osbourne band guitar slot in 1995 was former Testament phenom Alex Skolnick. But after auditioning and being told he "got the gig," Skolnick played just one single U.K. concert with Ozzy in June of that year, before being told his services would, in fact, not be needed.

8

Jerry Cantrell

By 2005, Ozzy's off-and-on relationship with Wylde was in the "off" position once again, as the latter focused on his Black Label Society. So when a multi-talented six stringer was required to help Osbourne record his star-studded covers album, 'Under Cover,' it was the Alice in Chains stalwart who helpfully stepped into the breach and got the job done.

7

Bernie Torme

Confusion and trauma ruled the Ozzy Osbourne camp in the immediate aftermath of Randy Rhoads' tragic death, but such was the fledgling state of the singer's solo career that the show

simply had to go on, as they say. So in their rush to find a suitable replacement, Sharon and Ozzy quickly tapped Bernie Torme (who had worked with Ian Gillan) to fill the void on tour, even if only for a month.

6

Gus G

One of the Ozzy Osbourne band's more surprising six-string recruits, Greek citizen Gus G (real name Kostas Karamitroudis) built his resume with a long string of European power metal bands, including Firewind, Dream Evil and Mystic Circle. And, since getting his invite to audition for Ozzy in 2009, he has proved himself a reliable and versatile contributor -- both on the road and on Ozzy's most recent studio solo album, 2010's 'Scream.'

5

Brad Gillis

Back to the convoluted post-Rhoads period we go, and the guitarist who, with his blonde locks, California roots, and copious guitar talents, seemed like a perfect long-term replacement for Randy: Brad Gillis. But, after helping Ozzy to complete his remaining tour engagements and performing on 1982's 'Speak of the Devil' live album, Gillis decided he'd be better off rejoining his promising original band, Night Ranger, instead.

4

Joe Holmes

Perhaps the most criminally under-appreciated guitarist ever to play in the Ozzy Osbourne band, Joe Holmes was an experienced veteran of Lizzy Borden and the David Lee Roth band, and a student of Randy Rhoads, to boot! But he seems to get very little respect despite competently replacing Zakk Wylde on many a tour, if not on record, as well as his lengthy term of faithful service -- five years -- to the Ozzman.

3

Jake E. Lee

Jake E. Lee parlayed his early experience with Mickey Rat (later Ratt) and Rough Cutt into a two-album stint with Ozzy's band, contributing much of the songwriting and all of the fretboard

fireworks that helped ‘Bark at the Moon’ and ‘The Ultimate Sin’ sell millions of copies. What’s more, perhaps no other guitarist managed to “escape” his time with the Osbournes as relatively unscathed as Lee, who went on to enjoy temporary success with Badlands before intentionally removing himself from the spotlight for many years until returning with recent project, Red Dragon Cartel.

2

Zakk Wylde

The long sought-after heir apparent to Randy Rhoads, the golden-haired, super-talented Zakk Wylde surely felt like a godsend to Ozzy and Sharon when they plucked him out of New Jersey obscurity in 1989. But Zakk quickly proved himself a more-than worthy successor, possessed of both the chops and on-stage charisma to break out on his own in due time (first with Pride & Glory, then with Black Label Society), while almost always answering Ozzy’s calls for help.

1

Randy Rhoads

And of course the most beloved Ozzy Osbourne guitarist is also the most pivotal musician he ever crossed paths with, Randy Rhoads. It’s no exaggeration to assert that Ozzy owes much of his career rebirth and subsequent success to the personal and creative relationship he established with Rhoads, after leaving Black Sabbath in the late-‘70s. That’s why each and every one of the very fine guitarists name-checked above can’t help but be compared to Randy’s groundbreaking talents and lingering legend. Such is the price of playing guitar in the Ozzy Osbourne band, but rarely is it not paid back in full, in one way or another, to those who have accepted the challenge.

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